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B6, B1, 1.4(D) ²⁰⁰⁶

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ACTION: VE (02)

INFO: DAND (02) RJ (01) MM (01) JPL (01) JRM (01) ARA (01) PPC (01)
OAS (01) PPA (01) EPSC (04) DEPC (01) LNE (01) CO (01)
EC (01) BL (01) BR (02) DGAR (01) DEP (01) TDGY (01)
----- 14/1655Z A1 RD (BTAL COPIES: 027)

ACTION ARA-00

INFO LOG-00 ACOA-00 ACDE-00 AID-00 ACO-00 CEA-01 CTME-00
DODE-00 DOEE-00 SRPP-00 BS-00 EB-00 EXIM-01 E-00
FRB-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 ITC-01 LAB-01 L-00
AOS-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OMB-01 OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00
PRS-00 P-00 SP-00 SSO-00 STR-00 TRSE-00 T-00
FMP-00 PMB-00 DSCC-00 ORI-02 G-00 FDIC-01 NFAT-00
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R 141506Z OCT 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1952
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY BRASIIIA
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DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1834
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, M. GRAFELD, DAS, A/GIS, ACTING
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DECLASSIFY AFTER: 13 OCT 2023
DATE/CASE ID: 14 JUN 2010 200503654

CONFIDENTIAL CARACAS 003087

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/08
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, EFIN, ECON, VE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HENRIQUE SALAS ROMER'S CAMPAIGN
PLATFORM

CLASSIFIED BY [REDACTED] REASON 1.5 (D) B6

SUMMARY

1. (U) VENEZUELA'S PRESSING PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT, HIGH CRIME,
INFLATION, POOR HEALTH CARE, AND A DETERIORATING EDUCATION SYSTEM
CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED IF GOVERNMENT RESTORES "RESPECT FOR THE
CITIZEN."

[REDACTED] SALAS ROMER PROPOSES A
THREE-POINT STRATEGIC PLAN WHICH WILL BRING POWER TO THE "CITIZEN"
THROUGH DECENTRALIZATION, ELIMINATE CLIENTELISM BY
PROFESSIONALIZING THE CIVIL SERVICE AND BREAKING THE HOLD OF
POLITICAL PARTIES ON STATE JOBS AND RESOURCES, AND INCLUDE CITIZENS
IN PUBLIC LIFE BY MAINSTREAMING PREVIOUSLY MARGINALIZED PEOPLE.
[REDACTED] HAVE REFINED THE CAMPAIGN PLATFORM AND ITS
MESSAGE THROUGH PRESENTATIONS IN ALL 23 STATES. THE RESPONSE, THEY
CLAIM, HAS BEEN ENTHUSIASTIC AND HAS PROMPTED SALAS ROMER TO MAKE
THE PLATFORM A KEY PART OF HIS CAMPAIGN.

END SUMMARY

RESTORING RESPECT FOR THE CITIZEN

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3. (U) [REDACTED] "RESPECT FOR THE CITIZEN" IS THE
"ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHICAL INSPIRATION" OF THE SALAS ROMER CAMPAIGN.
[REDACTED] SALAS WANTS TO RESTORE RESPECT FOR THE CITIZEN THROUGH
DECENTRALIZATION, "DE-PARTY-FICATION," AND DEMARGINALIZATION.

4. (U) [REDACTED] MOST VENEZUELAN BELIEVE VENEZUELA IS IN A
SERIOUS CRISIS THAT HAS RESULTED IN POLITICAL AND MORAL
DETERIORATION. VENEZUELAN DESIRE A CLEAR BREAK WITH THE VICES
THAT AFFLICT VENEZUELA. SALAS OFFERS SUCH A BREAK, [REDACTED]
ASSERTED, PRESENTING "NOT HOLLOW PROMISES, BUT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
LIKE-MINDED CITIZENS TO FIGHT FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION."
SALAS' STRATEGIC PROPOSALS ARE:

-- RECONSTRUCT THE STATE AND MAKE IT A GUARANTOR OF SECURITY FOR
THE CITIZEN AND AN EFFECTIVE SUPPORT OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND
SOCIAL LIFE;

-- REJECT CLIENTELIST POLITICS AND PROMOTE THE CONSOLIDATION OF A
TALENTED BUREAUCRACY THAT IS CONSCIOUS OF ITS RIGHTS AND DUTIES;

-- ADVANCE STATE GOVERNMENTS AS FIRST-RATE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND
ECONOMIC ACTORS;

-- ASSERT THAT THE VENEZUELAN CITIZEN HAS THE RIGHT TO PROSPERITY
AND HONOR AND, EQUALLY, THE RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK TO ACHIEVE THEM;
AND

-- ENSURE THAT THE RULE OF LAW IS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED UPON THE BASE
OF A FAIR AND EFFICIENT JUDICIAL SYSTEM THAT SERVES AS AN IMPARTIAL
ARBITER.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DECENTRALIZATION

5. (U) [REDACTED] DECENTRALIZATION A "STRATEGIC TOOL" TO
REBUILD A COHESIVE NATION. HE ARGUED THAT THROUGH ASSIGNING
RESPONSIBILITIES TO EACH APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF THE NATION, THE
PUBLIC WILL CONTROL THEIR OWN DESTINIES, CITIZENS WILL DEVELOP A
SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, AND THE NATION WILL ACHIEVE GREATER
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY FOR ITS DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM.

"DE-PARTY-FYING" THE STATE

6. (U) "DE-PARTY-FICATION" IS A CENTRAL THEME OF THE SALAS
PROGRAM. [REDACTED] "IF WE ARE TO TALK ABOUT A REFORM OF THE
EDUCATION SYSTEM, OR OF AN IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES, OR
TO REPAIR THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, OR TO LIBERATE JUDGES FROM
INAPPROPRIATE PRESSURE, WE MUST 'DE-PARTY-IFY,' WITHOUT

RESERVATIONS, THE STATE, AND EXTRACT THE JUDICIAL BRANCH FROM THE
TENTACLES OF A CONGRESS THAT PERMIT PARTY LEADERSHIP TO MEDDLE IN
JUDICIAL ISSUES." [REDACTED] SALAS WANTS A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS
BOTH "EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT." A GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL ATTRACT
NOT PARTY HACKS BUT "CAPABLE PEOPLE, WITH MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND A

CALLING TO PUBLIC SERVICE."

DEMARGINALIZATION

7. (U) [REDACTED] A CENTRAL PIECE OF SALAS' SOCIAL PROGRAM IS
THE BELIEF THAT A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION HAS BEEN

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"MARGINALIZED" BY THE STATE THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO
PROVIDE SERVICES. THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT LOST TO THE COUNTRY,
BUT NEED SERVICES SUCH AS RECENT EDUCATION,
ELECTRICITY, WATER, AND TRANSPORTATION TO RE-INTEGRATE THEMSELVES
INTO SOCIETY." SALAS' CALLS FOR:

- PROVIDING STREETS, POTABLE WATER, AND ELECTRICITY;
- TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS INTO COMMUNITY CENTERS;
- PROVIDING ACCESS TO PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE;
- PROMOTING ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE WEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT;
- INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY TO FIGHT AND PREVENT CRIME;
- PROMOTING SOUND NUTRITIONAL PRACTICES; AND
- ELEVATING THE CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL LEVEL OF CITIZENS.

SALAS' HEALTH CARE SOLUTIONS

8. (U) [] SALAS AIMS TO PROVIDE AN INTEGRATED B6
HEALTH CARE PREVENTION SYSTEM. ACCORDING [] SALAS WOULD
PROVIDE NUTRITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO NEWBORNS THROUGH AGE 5, AND A
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TWO DAILY MEALS TO ALL
STUDENTS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL. SCHOOL SPORTS WOULD ALSO
BE REQUIRED. THIS SUB-PLAN ALSO EMPHASIZED SANITATION IN MARGINAL
HOUSING AREAS, AND AMELIORATING ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION. SALAS
WOULD CONTINUE THE "PROVAL FOOD STAPLE PROGRAM" WHICH BUYS MASS
QUANTITIES OF STAPLES, (E.G. RICE, FLOUR, BEANS) AND DISTRIBUTES
THESE STAPLES AT A REDUCED PRICE TO THE PUBLIC; THIS PROGRAM IS
NOT SUBSIDIZED, BUT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE. TO
RELIEVE PRESSURES ON PUBLIC HOSPITALS, THE PROGRAM CALLED FOR THE
RENEWED EMPHASIS ON AMBULATORY, OUT-PATIENT CARE. FINALLY, THE
PROGRAM CALLED FOR THE "DE-PARTY-FICATION" OF THE HOSPITALS.
BELIEVING THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO HEALTH OUTWEIGHS THE
CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO STRIKE, THE SALAS PLAN REJECTS THE RIGHT OF
HEALTH CARE WORKER UNIONS TO STRIKE.

SALAS' EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

9. (U) [] THE CENTRAL THEME OF SALAS' EDUCATION SUB-
PLAN IS TO TRANSFORM SCHOOLS FROM PURE EDUCATIONAL PLACES INTO
COMMUNITY CENTERS. THE PLAN CALLS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
AUTONOMOUS SCHOOLS THAT WOULD MANAGE THEIR OWN RESOURCES, AND
DISCIPLINE THEIR OWN STAFFS. THIS SUB-PLAN CALLS FOR THE
MODIFICATION OF THE ORGANIC LAW ON EDUCATION TO INCREASE THE NUMBER
OF SCHOOL DAYS TO 200 (1,600 HOURS), REDUCE THE NUMBER OF REQUIRED
SUBJECTS TO 6-7 FROM 12-14, AND REQUIRE THAT THESE SCHOOL DAYS BE

6 HOUR "FULL DAY (TURNO COMPLETO)." LAMENTING THE GREAT
DIFFICULTIES THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION HAD IN NEGOTIATING WITH 200
TEACHERS UNIONS ORGANIZED INTO 7 UMBRELLA CONFEDERATIONS (SIX OF
WHICH ARE CONTROLLED BY POLITICAL PARTIES), []
SALAS WOULD "DE-PARTY-LIZE" THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. THE PLAN
CALLS FOR DEDICATING 5 PERCENT OF GDP (UP FROM 3.1 PERCENT) TO
EDUCATION. WHILE EDUCATION CREDITS WOULD BE PROVIDED TO NEEDY
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, THE PROGRAM WOULD REQUIRE THAT THOSE WHO CAN
PAY FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, PAY.

SALAS' SECURITY SOLUTIONS

10. (U) SALAS CALLS FOR THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL SECURITY

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COUNCIL TO PROVIDE THE PRESIDENT OPTIONS ON AND INSIGHTS INTO

NATIONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS: THE SITUATION ALONG THE BORDER,
COUNTER-NARCOTICS, AND FOREIGN POLICY. SECOND, WITH RESPECT TO
JUDICIAL SECURITY, THIS SUB-PLAN CALLS FOR THE NAMING OF JUDGES
ACCORDING TO COMPETITION, NOT ELECTIONS. SALAS WOULD STRIVE TO
ESTABLISH A TRANSPARENT MECHANISM, TO BE MANAGED BY THE NATIONAL
JUDICIAL COUNCIL, TO EVALUATE AND NAME JUDGES. ON THE ISSUE OF
TERRITORIAL SECURITY, [] THE GOV HAD LEFT THE
"FIELD EMPTY" ALONG THE BORDERS WITH COLOMBIA AND BRAZIL. IN LIEU
OF THEATERS OF OPERATION, THE SALAS PROGRAM WOULD ESTABLISH
THEATERS OF DEVELOPMENT TO ENABLE THE GOV TO "PUT DOWN ROOTS" AND
POPULATE THE BORDER AREAS. UNDER THE RUBRIC OF FOOD SECURITY, THIS
SUB-PLAN ADVOCATES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RATIONAL PROGRAM TO
SUPPORT AGRICULTURE. WHILE MAINTAINING COMPETITION, SALAS WOULD

ESTABLISH TAX INCENTIVES TO PRODUCE CERTAIN FOODSTUFFS. FINALLY,
TO ENHANCE PERSONAL SECURITY, SALAS CALLED FOR THE
"RATIONALIZATION" OF THE POLICE. SALAS WOULD ELIMINATE THE
TECHNICAL JUDICIAL POLICE (PJ), ESTABLISH POLICE ACADEMIES THAT
WOULD PROVIDE A HIGHER LEVEL OF TRAINING, AND ENSURE THAT THE
POLICE ARE PUBLIC SERVANTS, NOT A FOREIGN OCCUPATION FORCE.

SALAS' SOLUTIONS FOR INFLATION/EMPLOYMENT

11. (U) [] A SALAS GOVERNMENT WOULD AIM TO ESTABLISH A
MORE "SYMMETRICAL" RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND CIVIL
SOCIETY. CURRENTLY, [] THE STATE WAS
DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGER THAN CIVIL SOCIETY. ON THE ISSUE OF
MACROECONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS, [] SALAS HAD BEEN
NOTABLY RETICENT BECAUSE THE REQUIRED ADJUSTMENTS WOULD BE VERY
PAINFUL. [] BY FEBRUARY, DEBT WOULD HAVE RISEN
TO 9-10 PERCENT OF GDP. TO COPE WITH FUTURE MACROECONOMIC
PROBLEMS, THE SALAS PROGRAM CALLS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
MACROECONOMIC STABILIZATION FUND. BY DIRECTING OIL EARNINGS OVER
A CERTAIN LIMIT, APPROXIMATELY USD 12 BILLION/YEAR, INTO A
MACROECONOMIC STABILIZATION FUND, THE GOV WOULD BE ABLE TO DEAL
WITH FUTURE FLUCTUATIONS IN THE PRICE OF OIL. SALAS' PLAN CALLED
FOR FISCAL DISCIPLINE LIMITING THE ROLE OF THE STATE TO THE
PROVISION OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS.

12. (U) [] A SALAS GOVERNMENT WOULD PURSUE AN
AGGRESSIVE PRIVATIZATION PLAN. [] THE CURRENT
GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR PRIVATIZATION IS "IN ITS STOMACH, NOT
HEART." HE SAID A SALAS GOVERNMENT WOULD USE PRIVATIZATION AS A

WAY TO GET THE STATE OUT OF BUSINESSES IN WHICH IT SHOULD NEVER
HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. ONE BIG CAVEAT -- PDVSA WOULD NOT BE
PRIVATIZED. THE PLAN CALLS FOR A STRONGER AND MORE INDEPENDENT
CENTRAL BANK, AND TO IMPROVE SENIAT'S TAX COLLECTION.

COMMENT

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